MARIE BELLOC LOWNDES

GOOD OLD ANNA

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CHAPTER I

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“And now,” asked Miss Forsyth thoughtfully, “and now, my dear Mary, what, may I ask, are you going to do about your good old Anna?”

“Do about Anna?” repeated the other. “I don’t quite understand what you mean.”

In her heart Mrs. Otway thought she understood very well what her old friend, Miss Forsyth, meant by the question. For it was Wednesday, the 5th of August, 1914. England had just declared war on Germany, and Anna was Mrs. Otway’s faithful, highly valued German servant.

Miss Forsyth was one of those rare people who always require an answer to a question, and who also (which is rarer still) seldom speak without having first thought out what they are about to say. It was this quality of mind, far more than the fact that she had been born, sixty years ago, in the Palace at Witanbury, which gave her the position she held in the society of the cathedral town.

But this time she herself went on speaking: “In your place I should think very seriously of sending Anna back to Germany.” There was an unusual note of hesitation and of doubt in her voice. As a rule Miss Forsyth knew exactly what she thought about everything, and what she herself would be minded to do in any particular case.

But the other lady, incensed at what she considered uncalled-for, even rather impertinent advice, replied sharply, “I shouldn’t think of doing anything so unkind and so unjust! Why, because the powers of evil have conquered

—I mean by that the dreadful German military party—should I behave unjustly to a faithful old German woman who has been with me—let me see—why, who has been with me exactly eighteen years? With the exception of a married niece with whom she went and stayed in Berlin three autumns ago, my poor old Anna hasn't a relation left in Germany. Her whole life is centred in me—or perhaps I ought to say in Rose. She was the only nurse Rose ever had."

"And yet she has remained typically German," observed Miss Forsyth irrelevantly.

"Of course she has!" cried Mrs. Otway quickly. "And that is why we are both so much attached to her. Anna has all the virtues of the German woman; she is faithful, kindly, industrious, and thrifty."

"But, Mary, has it not occurred to you that you will find it very awkward sometimes?" Again without waiting for an answer, Miss Forsyth went on: "Our working people have long felt it very hard that there should be so many Germans in England, taking away their jobs."

"They have only themselves to thank for that," said Mrs. Otway, with more sharpness than was usual with an exceptionally kindly and amiable nature. "Germans are much more industrious than our people are, and they are content with less wages. Also you must forgive me if I say, dear Miss Forsyth, that I don't quite see what the jealousy of the average working-man, or, for the matter of that, of the average mechanic, has to do with my good old Anna, especially at such a time as this."

“Don’t you really?” Miss Forsyth looked curiously into the other’s flushed and still fair, delicately tinted face. She had always thought Mary Otway a rather foolish, if also a lovable, generous-hearted woman. But this was one of the few opinions Miss Forsyth always managed to keep to herself.

“I suppose you mean,” said the other reluctantly, “that if I had not had Anna as a servant all these years I should have been compelled to have an Englishwoman?”

“Yes, Mary, that is exactly what I do mean! But of course I should never have spoken to you about the matter were it not for to-day’s news. My maid, Pusey, you know, spoke to me about it this morning, and said that if you should be thinking of parting with her—if your good old Anna should be thinking, for instance, of going back to Germany—she knew some one who she thought would suit you admirably. It’s a woman who was cook in a very good London place, and whose health has rather given way.”

Miss Forsyth spoke with what was for her unusual animation.

As is always the way with your active, intelligent philanthropist, she was much given to vicarious deeds of charity. At the same time she never spared herself. Her own comfortable house always contained one or more of the odd-come-shorts whom she had not managed to place out in good situations.

Again a wave of resentment swept over Mrs. Otway. This was really too much!

“How would such a woman as you describe—a cook who has been in a good London place, and who has lost her

health—work into our—mine and Rose's—ways? Why, we should both be afraid of such a woman! She would impose on us at every turn. If you only knew, dear Miss Forsyth, how often, in the last twenty years, I have thanked God—I say it in all reverence—for having sent me my good old Anna! Think what it has been to me"—she spoke with a good deal of emotion—"to have in my tiny household a woman so absolutely trustworthy that I could always go away and leave my child with her, happy in the knowledge that Rose was as safe with Anna as she was with me——"

Her voice broke, a lump came into her throat, but she hurried on: "Don't think that it has all been perfect—that I have lain entirely on a bed of roses! Anna has been very tiresome sometimes; and, as you know, her daughter, to whom I was really attached, and whom I regarded more or less as Rose's foster-sister, made that unfortunate marriage to a worthless London tradesman. That's the black spot in Anna's life—I don't mind telling you that it's been a blacker spot in mine than I've ever cared to admit, even to myself. The man's always getting into scrapes, and having to be got out of them! Why, *you* once helped me about him, didn't you? and since then James Hayley actually had to go to the police about the man."

"Mr. Hayley will be busier than ever now."

"Yes, I suppose he will."

And then the two ladies, looking at one another, smiled one of those funny little smiles which may mean a great deal, or nothing at all.

James Hayley, the son of one of Mrs. Otway's first cousins, was in the Foreign Office; and if he had an

inordinate opinion of himself and of his value to his country, he was still a very good, steady fellow. Lately he had fallen into the way of coming down to Witanbury exceedingly often; but when doing so he did not stay with the Otways, in their pretty house in the Close, as would have been natural and as would also naturally have made his visits rather less frequent; instead, he stayed in lodgings close to the gateway which divided the Close from the town, and thus was able to be at the Trellis House as much or as little as he liked. It was generally much. Mrs. Otway wondered whether the war would so far affect his work as to keep him away from Witanbury this summer. She rather hoped it would.

"I'm even more sorry than usual for Jervis Blake to-day!" and this time there was a note of real kindness in Miss Forsyth's voice. "I shouldn't be surprised if he enlisted."

"Oh, I hope he won't do *that*!" Mrs. Otway was shocked at the suggestion. Jervis Blake was a person for whom she had a good deal of tolerant affection. He was quite an ordinary young man, and he had had the quite ordinary bad luck of failing to pass successive Army examinations. The news that he had failed again had just become known to his friends, and unluckily it was his last chance, as he was now past the age limit. The exceptional feature in his very common case was that he happened to be the only son of a distinguished soldier.

"*I* should certainly enlist if I were he," continued Miss Forsyth thoughtfully. "He wouldn't have long to wait for promotion from the ranks."

"His father would never forgive him!"

“The England of to-day is a different England from the England of yesterday,” observed Miss Forsyth drily; and as the other stared at her, genuinely astonished by the strange words, “Don’t you agree that that is so, Mary?”

“No, I can’t say that I do.” Mrs. Otway spoke with greater decision than was her wont. Miss Forsyth was far too fond of setting the world to rights.

“Ah! well, I think it is. And I only wish I was a young man instead of an old woman! I’m sorry for every Englishman who is too old to take up arms in this just cause. What must be Major Guthrie’s feelings to-day! How he must regret having left the Army to please his selfish old mother! It’s the more hard on him as he always believed this war would come. He really *knows* Germany.”

“Major Guthrie only knows *military* Germany,” said Mrs. Otway slowly.

“It’s only what you call military Germany which counts to-day,” observed Miss Forsyth quickly; and then, seeing that her friend looked hurt, and even, what she so very seldom was, angry too, she held out her hand with the words: “And now I must be moving on, for before going to the cathedral I have to see Mrs. Haworth for a minute. By the way, I hear that the Dean intends to give a little address about the war.” She added, in a different and a kindlier tone: “You must forgive me, Mary, for saying what I did about your good old Anna! But you know I’m really fond of you, and I’m even fonder of your sweet Rose than I am of you. I always feel that there is a great deal in Rose—more than in any other girl I know. And then—well, Mary, she is so very

pretty! prettier than you even were, though you had a way of making every one think you lovely!”

Mrs. Otway laughed. She was quite mollified. “I know how fond you are of Rose,” she said gratefully, “and, of course, I don’t mind your having spoken to me about Anna. But as to parting with her—that would mean the end of the world to us, to your young friend Rose even more than to me. Why, it would be worse—far worse—than the war!”

CHAPTER II

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As Mrs. Otway walked slowly on, she could not help telling herself that dear old Miss Forsyth had been more interfering and tiresome than she usually was this morning.

She felt ruffled by the little talk they two had just had—so ruffled and upset that, instead of turning into the gate of the house where she had been bound—for she, too, had meant to pay a call in the Close on her way to the cathedral—she walked slowly on the now deserted stretch of road running through and under the avenue of elm trees which are so beautiful and distinctive a feature of Witanbury Close.

Again a lump rose to her throat, and this time the tears started into her eyes and rolled down her cheeks. In sheer astonishment at her own emotion, she stopped short, and taking out her handkerchief dabbed her eyes hurriedly. How strange that this interchange of words with one whose peculiarities she had known, and, yes, suffered under and smiled at for so many years, should make her feel so—so—so upset!

Mrs. Otway was a typical Englishwoman of her age, which was forty-three, and of her class, which was that from which are drawn most of the women from whom the clergy of the Established Church choose their wives. There are thousands such, living in serene girlhood, wifehood, or widowhood, to be found in the villages and country towns of dear old England. With but very few exceptions, they are kindly-natured, unimaginative, imbued with a shrinking dislike of any exaggerated display of emotion; in some ways

amazingly broad-minded, in others curiously limited in their outlook on life. Such women, as a rule, present few points of interest to students of human nature, for they are almost invariably true to type, their virtues and their defects being cast in the same moulds.

But Mrs. Otway was much more original and more impulsive, thus far less “groovy,” than the people among whom her lot was cast. There were even censorious folk in Witanbury who called her eccentric. She was generous-hearted, easily moved to enthusiasm, tenacious of her opinions and prejudices. She had remained young of heart, and her fair, curling hair, her slight, active figure, and delicately-tinted skin, gave her sometimes an almost girlish look. Those who met her for the first time were always surprised to find that Mrs. Otway had a grown-up daughter.

As a girl she had spent two very happy years in Germany, at Weimar, and she had kept from those far-off days a very warm and affectionate feeling towards the Fatherland, as also a rather exceptionally good knowledge both of the German language and of old-fashioned German literature. Then had come a short engagement, followed by five years of placid, happy marriage with a minor canon of Witanbury Cathedral. And then, at the end of those five years, which had slipped by so easily and so quickly, she had found herself alone, with one little daughter, and woefully restricted means. It had seemed, and indeed it had been, a godsend to come across, in Anna Bauer, a German widow who, for a miraculously low wage, had settled down into her little household, to become and to remain, not only

an almost perfect servant, but as time went on a most valued and trusted friend.

The fact that Mrs. Otway had been left a legacy by a distant relation, while making her far more comfortable, had not caused her to alter very materially her way of life. She had raised Anna's modest wage, and she was no longer compelled to look quite so closely after every penny. Also, mother and daughter were now able to take delightful holidays together. They had planned one such for this very autumn to Germany—Germany, the country still so dear to Mrs. Otway, which she had always longed to show her daughter.

It was natural that the news which had burst upon England to-day should have unsealed the fountain of deep emotion in her nature. Mrs. Otway, like almost every one she knew, had not believed that there would or could be a great Continental war, and when that had become, with stunning suddenness, an accomplished fact, she had felt sure that her country would remain out of the awful maelstrom.

Send their good old Anna back to Germany? Why, the idea was unthinkable! What would she, Mary Otway, what would her daughter, Rose, do without Anna? Anna had become—Mrs. Otway realised it to-day as she had never realised it before—the corner-stone of their modest, happy House of Life.

Miss Forsyth had, however, said one thing which was unfortunately true. It is strange how often these positive, rather managing people hit the right nail on the head! The fact that England and Germany were now at war *would*

sometimes make things a little awkward with regard to poor old Anna. Something of the kind had, indeed, happened on this very morning, less than two hours ago. And at the time it had been very painful, very disagreeable....

Mrs. Otway and her daughter, each opening a newspaper before beginning breakfast, had looked up, and in awe-struck tones simultaneously exclaimed, “Why, we are at war!” and “War has been declared!” And then Mrs. Otway, as was her wont, had fallen into eager, impulsive talk. But she had to stop abruptly when the dining-room door opened —for it revealed the short, stumpy figure of Anna, smiling, indeed beaming even more than usual, as she brought in the coffee she made so well. Mother and daughter had looked at one another across the table, an unspoken question in each pair of kind eyes. That question was: *Did poor old Anna know*?

The answer came with dramatic swiftness, and in the negative. Anna approached her mistress, still with that curious look of beaming happiness in her round, fat, plain face, and after she had put down the coffee-jug she held out her work-worn hand. On it was a pink card, and in her excitement she broke into eager German.

“The child has come!” she exclaimed. “Look! This is what I have received, gracious lady,” and she put the card on her mistress’s plate.

What was written, or rather printed, on that fancy-looking card, ran, when Englished, as follows:

THE JOYOUS BIRTH OF A LARGE-EYED SUNDAY MAIDEN

IS ANNOUNCED, ULTRA-JUBILANTLY, BY

Of course they both congratulated their good old Anna very heartily on the birth of the little great-niece in Berlin—indeed Rose, jumping up from the table, had surprised her mother by giving her old nurse a hug. “I’m so glad, dear Anna! How happy they seem to be!”

But when Anna had returned to her kitchen the two ladies had gone on silently and rather sadly with their breakfasts and their papers; and after she had finished, Mrs. Otway, with a heavy heart, had walked across the hall, to her pretty kitchen, to tell Anna the great and tragic news.

The kitchen of the Trellis House was oddly situated just opposite Mrs. Otway’s sitting-room and at right angles to the dining-room. Thus the two long Georgian windows of Anna’s domain commanded the wide green of the Cathedral Close, and the kitchen door was immediately on your right as you walked through the front door into the arched hall of the house.

On this momentous morning Anna’s mistress found the old German woman sitting at her large wooden table writing a letter. When Mrs. Otway came in, Anna looked up and smiled; but she did not rise, as an English servant would have done.

Mrs. Otway walked across to her, and very kindly she laid her hand on the older woman’s shoulder.

“I have something sad to tell you,” she said gently. “England, my poor Anna, is at war! England has declared war on Germany! But I have come to tell you, also, that the

fact that our countries are at war will make no difference to you and to me, Anna—will it?”

Anna had looked up, and for a moment she had seemed bewildered, stunned by the news. Then all the colour had receded from her round face; it became discomposed, covered with red streaks. She broke into convulsive sobs as, shaking her head violently, she exclaimed, “Nein! Nein!”

If only poor old Anna had left it there! But she had gone on, amid her sobs, to speak wildly, disconnectedly, and yes—yes, rather arrogantly too, of the old war with France in 1870—of her father, and of her long-dead brother; how both of them had fought, how gloriously they had conquered!

Mrs. Otway had begun by listening in silence to this uncalled-for outburst. But at last, with a touch of impatience, she broke across these ill-timed reminiscences with the words, “But now, Anna? *Now* there is surely no one belonging to your family likely to fight? No one, I mean, likely to fight against England?”

The old woman stared at her stupidly, as if scarcely understanding the sense of what was being said to her; and Mrs. Otway, with a touch of decision in her voice, had gone on—“How fortunate it is that your Louisa married an Englishman!”

But on that Anna had again shaken her head violently. “No, no!” she cried. “Would that a German married she had—an honest, heart-good German, not a man like that bad, worthless George!”

To this surely unnecessary remark Mrs. Otway had made no answer. It was unluckily true that Anna’s English son-in-law lacked every virtue dear to a German heart. He was

lazy, pleasure-loving, dishonest in small petty ways, and contemptuous of his thrifty wife's anxious efforts to save money. Still, though it was not perhaps wise to say so just now, it would certainly have been a terrible complication if "little Louisa," as they called her in that household, had married a German—a German who would have had to go back to the Fatherland to take up arms, perhaps, against his adopted country! Anna ought surely to see the truth of that to-day, however unpalatable that truth might be.

But, sad to say, good old Anna had been strangely lacking in her usual good sense, and sturdy good-humour, this morning. Not content with that uncalled-for remark concerning her English son-in-law, she had wailed out something about "Willi"—for so she always called Wilhelm Warshauer—the nephew by marriage to whom she had become devotedly attached during the pleasant holiday she had spent in Germany three years ago.

"I do not think Willi is in the least likely to go to the war and be killed," said Mrs. Otway at last, a little sharply. "Why, he is in the police—a sub-inspector! They would never dream of sending him away. And then—— Anna? I wish you would listen to me quietly for a moment——"

Anna fixed her glazed, china-blue eyes anxiously on her mistress.

"If you go on in this way you will make yourself quite ill; and that wouldn't do at all! I am quite sure that you will soon hear from your niece that Willi is quite safe, that he is remaining on in Berlin. England and Germany are civilised nations after all! There need not be any unreasonable

bitterness between them. Only the soldiers and sailors, not our two nations, will be at war, Anna."

Yes, the recollection of what had happened this morning left an aftermath of bitterness in Mrs. Otway's kind heart. It was only too true that it would sometimes be awkward; in saying so downright Miss Forsyth had been right! She told herself, however, that after a few days they surely would all get accustomed to this strange, unpleasant, new state of things. Why, during the long Napoleonic wars Witanbury had always been on the *qui vive*, expecting a French landing on the coast—that beautiful coast which was as lonely now as it had been then, and which, thanks to motors and splendid roads, seemed much nearer now than then. England had gone on much as usual a hundred years ago. Mrs. Otway even reminded herself that Jane Austen, during those years of stress and danger, had been writing her delightful, her humorous, her placid studies of life as though there were no war!

And then, perhaps because of her invocation of that dear, shrewd mistress of the average British human heart, Mrs. Otway, feeling far more comfortable than she had yet felt since her talk with Miss Forsyth, began retracing her steps towards the cathedral.

She was glad to know that the Dean was going to give a little address this morning. It was sure to be kindly, wise, benignant—for he was himself all these three things. Many delightful German thinkers, theologians and professors, came and went to the Deanery, and Mrs. Otway was always asked to meet these distinguished folk, partly because of

her excellent knowledge of German, and also because the Dean knew that, like himself, she loved Germany.

And now she turned sick at heart, as she suddenly realised that for a time, at any rate, these pleasant meetings would take place no more. But soon—or so she hoped with all her soul—this strange unnatural war would be over. Even now the bubble of Prussian militarism was pricked, for the German Army was not doing well at Liége. During the last two or three days she had read the news with increasing amazement and—but she hardly admitted it to herself—with dismay. She did not like to think of Germans breaking and running away! It had hurt her, made her angry, to hear the exultation with which some of her neighbours had spoken of the news. It was all very well to praise the gallant little Belgians, but why should that be done at the expense of the Germans?

Mrs. Otway suddenly told herself that she hoped Major Guthrie would not be at the cathedral this morning. Considering that they disagreed about almost everything, it was odd what friends he and she were! But about Germany they had never agreed, and that was the more strange inasmuch as Major Guthrie had spent quite a long time in Stuttgart. He thought the Germans of to-day entirely unlike the Germans of the past. He honestly believed them to be unprincipled, untrustworthy, and unscrupulous; and, strangest thing of all—or so Mrs. Otway had thought till within the last few days—he had long been convinced that they intended to conquer Europe by force of arms! So strong was this conviction of his that he had given time, and yes,

money too, to the propaganda carried on by Lord Roberts in favour of National Service.

It was odd that a man whose suspicions of the country which was to her so dear almost amounted to a monomania, should have become her friend. But so it was. In fact, Major Guthrie was her only man friend. He advised her about all the things concerning which men are supposed to know more than women—such as investments, for instance. Of course she did not always take his advice, but it was often a comfort to talk things out with him, and she had come instinctively to turn to him when in any little trouble. Few days passed without Major Guthrie's calling, either by chance or in response to a special invitation, at the Trellis House.

Unfortunately, or was it fortunately? the handsome old mother, for whose sake Major Guthrie had left the Army three years ago, didn't care for clerical society. She only liked country people and Londoners. As far as Mrs. Otway could dislike any one, she disliked Mrs. Guthrie; but the two ladies seldom had occasion to meet—the Guthries lived in a pretty old house in Dorycote, a village two miles from Witanbury. Also Mrs. Guthrie was more or less chair-ridden, and Mrs. Otway had no carriage.

The bells of the cathedral suddenly broke across her troublesome, disconnected thoughts. Mrs. Otway never heard those chimes without a wave of remembrance, sometimes very slight, sometimes like to-day quite strong and insistent, of past joys and sorrows. Those bells were interwoven with the whole of her wifehood, motherhood, and widowhood; they had rung for her wedding, they had

mustered the tiny congregation who had been present at Rose’s christening; the great bell had tolled the day her husband had died, and again to bid the kindly folk of Witanbury to his simple funeral. Some day, perhaps, the bells would ring a joyful peal in honour of Rose’s wedding.

As she walked up the path which leads from the road encircling the Close to the cathedral, she tried to compose and attune her mind to solemn, peaceful thoughts.

There was a small congregation, perhaps thirty in all, gathered together in the choir, but the atmosphere of that tiny gathering of people was slightly electric and charged with emotion. The wife of the Dean, a short, bustling lady, who had never been so popular in Witanbury and its neighbourhood as was her husband, came forward and beckoned to Mrs. Otway. “If no one else comes in,” she whispered, “I think we might all come up a little nearer. The Dean is going to say a few words about the war.”

And though a few more people did come in during the five minutes that followed, the whole of the little congregation finally collected in the stalls nearest the altar. And it was not from the ornate white stone pulpit, but from the steps of the altar, that the Dean, after the short service was over, delivered his address.

For what seemed a long time—it was really only a very few moments—Dr. Haworth stood there, looking thoughtfully at this little gathering of his fellow-countrymen and countrywomen. Then he began speaking. With great simplicity and directness he alluded to the awesome news which this morning had brought to them, to England. England’s declaration of war against their great neighbour,

Germany—their great neighbour, and they should never forget, the only other great European nation which shared with them the blessings, he was willing to admit the perhaps in some ways doubtful blessings, brought about by the Reformation.

On hearing these words, three or four of his hearers moved a little restlessly in their seats, but soon even they settled themselves down to take in, and to approve, what he had to say.

England was going to war, however, in a just cause, to make good her promise to a small and weak nation. She had often drawn her sword on behalf of the oppressed, and never more rightly than now. But it would be wrong indeed for England to allow her heart to be filled with bitterness. It was probable that even at this moment a large number of Germans were ashamed of what had happened last Monday—he alluded to the Invasion of Belgium. Frederick the Great had once said that God was always on the side of the big battalions; in so saying he had been wrong. Even in the last two or three days they had seen how wrong. Belgium was putting up a splendid defence, and the time might come—he, the speaker, hoped it would be very soon—when Germany would realise that Might is not Right, when she would confess, with the large-hearted chivalry possible to a great and powerful nation, that she had been wrong.

Meanwhile the Dean wished to impress on his hearers the need for a generous broad-mindedness in their attitude towards the foe. England was a great civilised nation, and so was Germany. The war would be fought in an honourable, straightforward manner, as between high-souled enemies.

Christian charity enjoined on us to be especially kind and considerate to those Germans who happened to be caught by this sad state of things, in our midst. He had heard these people spoken of that morning as “alien enemies.” For his part he would not care to describe by any such offensive terms those Germans who were settled in England in peaceful avocations. The war was not of their making, and those poor foreigners were caught up in a terrible web of tragic circumstance. He himself had many dear and valued friends in Germany, professors whose only aim in life was the spread of “Kultur,” not perhaps quite the same thing as we meant by the word culture, for the German “Kultur” meant something with a wider, more universal significance. He hoped the time would come, sooner perhaps than many pessimists thought possible, when those friends would acknowledge that England had drawn her sword in a righteous cause and that Germany had been wrong to provoke her.

CHAPTER III

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While Mrs. Otway had been thinking over the now rather painful problem of her good old Anna, the subject of her meditations, that is Anna herself, from behind the pretty muslin curtain which hid her kitchen from the passers-by, was peeping out anxiously on the lawn-like stretch of green grass, bordered on two sides by high elms, which is so pleasant a feature of Witanbury Close.

Her knitting was in her hands, for Anna's fingers were never idle, but just now the needles were still.

When your kitchen happens to be one of the best rooms on the ground floor, and one commanding not only the gate of your domain but the road beyond, it becomes important that it should not be quite like other people's kitchens. It was Mrs. Otway's pride, as well as Anna's, that at any moment of the day a visitor who, after walking into the hall, opened by mistake the kitchen door, would have found everything there in exquisite order. The shelves, indeed, were worth going some way to see, for each shelf was edged with a beautiful "Kante" or border of crochet-work almost as fine as point lace. In fact, the kitchen of the Trellis House was more like a stage kitchen than a kitchen in an ordinary house, and the way in which it was kept was the more meritorious inasmuch as Anna, even now, when she had become an old woman, would have nothing of what is in England called "help." She had no wish to see a charwoman in *her* kitchen. Fortunately for her, there lay, just off and behind the kitchen, a roomy scullery, where most of the

dirty, and what may be called the smelly, work connected with cooking was done.

To the left of the low-ceilinged, spacious, rather dark scullery was Anna's own bedroom. Both the scullery and the servant's room were much older than the rest of the house, for the picturesque gabled bit of brown and red brick building which projected into the garden, at the back of the Trellis House, belonged to Tudor days, to those spacious times when the great cathedral just across the green was a new pride and joy to the good folk of Witanbury.

As Anna stood at one of the kitchen windows, peeping out at the quiet scene outside, but not drawing aside the curtain—for that she knew was forbidden to her, and Anna very seldom consciously did anything she knew to be forbidden—she felt far more unhappy and far more disturbed than did Mrs. Otway herself.

This morning's news had stirred poor old Anna—stirred her more profoundly than even her kind mistress guessed. Mrs. Otway would have been surprised indeed had it been revealed to her that ever since breakfast Anna had spent a very anxious time thinking over her own immediate future, wondering with painful indecision as to whether it were not her duty to go back to Germany. But whereas Mrs. Otway had the inestimable advantage of being quite sure that she knew what it was best for Anna to do, the old German woman herself was cruelly torn between what was due to her mistress, to her married daughter, and, yes, to herself.

How unutterably amazed Mrs. Otway would have been this morning had she known that more than a month ago Anna had received a word of warning from Berlin. But so it

was: her niece had written to her, “It is believed that war this summer there is to be. Willi has been warned that something shortly will happen.”

And now, as Anna stood there anxiously peeping out at the figure of her mistress pacing up and down under the avenue of high elms across the green, she did not give more than a glancing thought to England’s part in the conflict, for her whole heart was absorbed in the dread knowledge that Germany was at war with terrible, barbarous Russia, and with prosperous, perfidious France.

England, so Anna firmly believed, had no army to speak of—no *real* army. She remembered the day when France had declared war on Germany in 1870. How at once every street of the little town in which she had lived had become full of soldiers—splendid, lion-hearted soldiers going off to fight for their beloved Fatherland. Nothing of the sort had taken place here, though Witanbury was a garrison town. The usual tradesmen, strong, lusty young men, had called for orders that morning. They had laughed and joked as usual. Not one of them seemed aware his country was at war. The old German woman’s lip curled disdainfully.

For the British, as a people, Anna Bauer cherished a tolerant affection and kindly contempt. It was true that, all unknowing to herself, she also had a great belief in British generosity and British justice. The idea that this war, or rather the joining in of England with France against Germany, could affect her own position or condition in England would have seemed to her absurd.

Germany and England? A contrast indeed! In Germany her son-in-law, that idle scamp George Pollit, would by now

be marching on his way to the French or Russian frontier. But George, being English, was quite safe—unfortunately. The only difference the war would make to him would be that it would provide him with an excuse for trying to get at some of Anna's carefully-hoarded savings.

If good old Anna had a fault—and curiously enough it was one of which her mistress was quite unaware, though Rose had sometimes uncomfortably suspected the fact—it was a love of money.

Anna, in spite of her low wages, had saved far more than an English servant earning twice as much would have done. Her low wage? Yes, still low, though she had been raised four pounds a year when her mistress had come into a better income. Before then Anna had been content with sixteen pounds a year. She now received twenty pounds, but she was ruefully aware that she was worth half as much again. In fact thirty pounds a year had actually been offered to her, in a roundabout way, by a lady who had come as a visitor to a house in the Close. But the lady, like Anna herself, was a German; and, apart altogether from every other consideration, including Anna's passionate love of Miss Rose, nothing would have made her take service with a mistress of her own nationality.

"This Mrs. Hirsch me to save her money wants. Her kind I know," she observed to the emissary who had been sent to sound her. "You can say that Anna Bauer a good mistress has, and knows when she well suited is."

She had said nothing of the matter to Mrs. Otway, but even so she sometimes thought of that offer, and she often felt a little sore when she reflected on the wages some of

the easy-going servants who formed part of the larger households in the Close received from their employers.

Yet, in this all-important matter of money a stroke of extraordinary good luck had befallen Anna—one of those things that very seldom come to pass in our work-a-day world. It had happened, or perhaps it would be truer to say it had begun—for, unlike most pieces of good fortune, it was continuous—just three years ago, in the autumn of 1911, shortly after her return from that glorious holiday at Berlin. This secret stroke of luck, for she kept it jealously to herself, though there was nothing about it at all to her discredit, had now lasted for over thirty months, and it had had the agreeable effect of greatly increasing her powers of saving. Of saving, that is, against the day when she would go back to Germany, and live with her niece.

Mrs. Otway would have been surprised indeed had she known that Anna not only meant to leave the Trellis House, but that, in a quiet, reflective kind of way, she actually looked forward to doing so. Miss Rose would surely marry, for a good many pleasant-mannered gentlemen came and went to the Trellis House (though none of them were as rich as Anna would have liked one of them to be), and she herself would get past her work. When that had come to pass she would go and live with her niece in Berlin. She had not told her daughter of this arrangement, and it had been spoken of by Willi and her niece more as a joke than anything else; still, Anna generally managed to carry through what she had made up her mind to accomplish.

But on this August morning, standing there by the kitchen window of the Trellis House, the future was far from

good old Anna's mind. Her mind was fixed on the present. How tiresome, how foolish of England to have mixed up with a quarrel which did not concern her! How strange that she, Anna Bauer, in spite of that word of warning from Berlin, had suspected nothing!

As a matter of fact Mrs. Otway had said something to her about Servia and Austria—something, too, more in sorrow than in anger, of Germany "rattling her sword." But she, Anna, had only heard with half an ear. Politics were out of woman's province. But there! English ladies were like that.

Many a time had Anna laughed aloud over the antics of the Suffragettes. About a month ago the boy who brought the meat had given her a long account of a riot—it had been a very little one—provoked by one such lady madwoman in the market-place of Witanbury itself. In wise masculine Germany the lady's relatives (for, strange to say, the Suffragette in question had been a high-born lady) would have put her in the only proper place for her, an idiot asylum.

Anna had been genuinely shocked and distressed on learning that her beloved nursling, Miss Rose, secretly rather sympathised with this mad female wish for a vote. Why, in Germany only some of the *men* had votes, and yet Germany was the most glorious, prosperous, and much-to-be-feared nation in the world. "Church, Kitchen, and Children"—that should be, and in the Fatherland still was, every true woman's motto and province.

Anna's mind came back with a sudden jerk to this morning's surprising, almost incredible news. Since her two ladies had gone out, she had opened the newspapers on her